[Told by a Rubber Worker]

[WPA?] L. of C. Project

[Form-2?]

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WPA L. of C. Project

Form-3

RECORD NO.

WRITERs' UNIT

Appraisal Sheet*

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1. Sources of data A rubber worker (name not given)

(name and address of informant, or printed sources, or unidentified)

2. Adequacy of data Ample, if the men knew his business.

(bibliography or other documentation, authority)

3. Adequacy of plan or organization

4. Quality of writing Fair

5. Correspondence consulted for appraisal No correspondence

6. Approved or disapproved for deposit [Aoorived?] if it becomes one in a series.

7. Reasons for decision It is interesting in narrative form

8. Suggested revisions and corrections Suggestions for editing on the mss.

(editorial and textual notes)

9. Suggested uses To comprise one of a series

(for publication, production, development)

10. Collation with related writers' records and publications

(cross-references, comparisons, background)

11. Collation with related literature

(bibliographical references, and annotations)

12. Abstract To one unacquainted with the rubber industry this

personal narrative should prove most interesting.

13. Date of appraisal Sept. 16, 1940

(initials of appraisor) Claude H. Wetmore

(signature of supervisor)

* Use additional pages, wherever necessary, referring to appropriate question by number.

200002

Mark Leiberman

Feb. 23, 1939

Revised March 16, 1939

Final Revision April 13, 1939 Told by a RUBBER WORKER

I never though I'd get used to the smell. Rubber, sulpher sulphur , blacking [-?] chemicals combined, produce an awful stench in a rubber plant. In a few weeks I got used to it. My sense of smell in so far as it concerned rubber [was concerned?] was deadened. To those who work there , a rubber plant smells no differently than the street outside. To a visitor the stench is unbearable.

[The first time I got “ layed - off “ my sense of?] [After my first layoff my sense of?] smell for rubber returned and when [I got back into?] returned to the shop, I had to get accustomed to the odor all over again. Those days are gone for good now. No matter how long I'm out, I smell nothing unusual when I get back. I can detect the odor of frying steak easily enough or a glass of home-made grape - wine , - but not rubber. If a rubber shop were to sneak up behind me and tap me on the shoulder, I who worked in one for fifteen years wouldn't know who what it was until I turned around and looked him it square in the eye. No loss [!?] I'd hate to lose my sense of smell for steak fried in onions. As for rubber, I 2 repeat, no loss at all !

In New England most of us are rubber footwear workers, and we turn out no less than two-thirds of our country's boots and shoes. Mostly we are Italian and [then?] there [is?] are lots of Irish, quite a few Scotch and English, many Poles, Lithuanians, Portuguese and Armenians , and a sprinkling of Syrian Syrians , Jewish Jews, [and workman workmen of many other nationalities.?] We work for the most part in big plants [/?/?] 3,500 at the Hood factory in Watertown, Massachusetts; 5,000 at the Naugutuck plant of the U.S. Rubber Company; 3,000 more in the Providence, Rhode Island plant of that corporation, while even the few independents employ anywheres anywhere from 500 to 1,500 hands.

Including the six or seven thousand making rubber tire tires and tube tubes , hosing and sundries, there are some 18,000 of us. Only ten years ago there were more than 25,500 [of?] [us?] in the New England rubber industry. More than 7,000 have lost their jobs, probably for good. Why? Well, that's my story.

I got an awful tough break. I worked in the shop for years doing odd jobs [?] before I [finally?] learned to make the complete shoe. Then, after I had worked for a few months as a full - fledged shoemaker , they did away with the individual ticket, a “ticket” being the term used for a given day's work.

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How each one of us performs only an almost insignificant portion of the work on each shoe. Same motions over and over again all day long. Those who roll the rubbers do nothing [else?] but roll, about one every fifteen seconds for seven and a half or eight hours every day. Those who last the “ shoe “ do nothing but last. The same with the others. For most jobs the only skill required is that of acquiring the necessary speed, and [what?] I mean, speed[.?] We once made an individual ticket.

No better place to start than at the beginning. I got my first job in a rubber shop before I took my first shave. Things hummed all year long in those days. When the winter shoe ticket dropped , the tennis ticket went way up. Then when the tennis ticket dropped [,?] there was plenty of work on winter shoes again. That was five years after the war against the “ Kaiser “ ended and five years before the war against depression began.

It was a “ dream “ of a job in those days. Didn't know what the word “ speed “ meant unless it was connected with the star half-back of the local high school team. Quality was the / slogan then; quality not quantity.

Like now, the making room was the most important room in the plant. Each “ maker “ had his own bench, his own tools and made his own ticket. Nothing to do with the next man. He did his job ; you did yours. A ticket 4 was 36 or 38 pairs a day and when you finished you went home. A good man, when he got half a break, finished his day's work at half past two or three o'clock and sometimes earlier. The foreman kept his eye on “how”, not “when.” Quality not quantity. A “ dream “ of a job!

The first break away from the individual ticket came when they began the “three-point team.” Three men worked together on a ticket, each doing approximately one-third of the work on each shoe. Before they got all of the shop working on the “three-point team” basis , an even greater change took place. [Now there's a [conveyor?] system.?]

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It was a few months after I got my own bench, my own tools and my own ticket that somebody come came out with the idea of installing the conveyor system. The men were wild. I was a new shoemaker and didn't count for much, but men who had made the complete shoe for fourteen or fifteen years [at first?] just couldn't see themselves doing the same little job over and over again all day long. They grumbled, complained, threatened and then did as they were told.

At first each man still did a considerable amount of the work on each shoe. Bit by bit the amount of work number of operations done by each was diminished and the amount of shoes put out by each team increased. As the work became more and 5 more simplified, it became easier to “ break in “ new hands. Young girls and boys just out of school were hired to work alongside [of?] experience shoemakers who couldn't forget that they once had made an “individual” ticket, the whole shoe from beginning to end. Pretty soon there were more youngsters than old timers. [?]

Then they began to increase the speed of the conveyor. At first a “team” made maybe 460 pairs of rubbers a day. After [a?] while they made 540 pairs. Then they installed the “merry-go-rounds.” Instead of a long belt that carried the last past each workman there were circular conveyors. Now you didn't have to pick up the last at all to do your portion of the work. The last was attached to a moveable jack and you did your work on the shoe without taking off the last at all. First 600 pairs, then 700, now about 900 pairs of rubbers in a day!

[200?] pound bales of rubber, bags of powdered chemicals, eyelets, and cardboard cartons all come to the receiving room by freight or truck. The stuff is stacked and then trucked as needed, the rubber to the compound room, eyelets and thread to the stitching room and so on. As in the shipping room, the years have brought little change to the receiving department.

The process of making the shoe really begins in the compound room. Right away an old - timer would notice 6 the big hydraulic cutting machines in the corner. * You Had had to cut the stuff with a [good?] sharp knife and use plenty of elbow grease [in the old days*]. Now the compond compound man tips a 2??pound 200-pound bale onto the runners of the cutter and pushes a button. Then he picks up the seven or eight pieces of rubber which the arm of the hydraulic cutter pushes through the curved knives like a big piece pieces of cheese.

In those days the compounder was an important cog in the wheel [of rubber manufacture?]. Formulas were secret documents. Only the [he?] the compounder and the chemist knew exactly how much of each chemical was used in the various kinds and colors of rubber sheeting. As far as rubber manufacture was concerned , he was pretty much of a chemist himself. A rubber manufacturer took pains to keep his compound man satisfied for fear he'd go elsewhere with his newly acquired exclusive knowledge.

Secret formulas are, on the whole, a thing of the past. Most everything is standardized. The contents of various “ batches “ are printed on slips of paper and all a compounder has to do is follow instructions.

Don't get me wrong! I don't mean that the compound man has a snap of a job. It's as tough a job as any in the plant and not very healthful to say the least. Only all he's got to know about chemistry these days is 7 how to tell the difference between a pound and seventeen ounces on a precision scale.

There's one respect in which compounding hasn't changed at all. That's chemical dust. The air is thick with it, and it settles on everything and everyone in the room. Go into almost any rubber plant. Scratch a fellow that's covered with dirt in most all of the colors of the rainbow and you'll find a compound man. Only the gods themselves know how many pounds of multi-colored dust he swallows in the course of a year. * Yes, it's a tough job all around. The batches have to be put up quickly, and yet carefully. Bags of chemicals have

to be lugged around, and clumsy 200 [lb?]. bales of rubber and 2 feet square , jogged from one spot to another.

[Mechanical ventilation help protect the worker against the dangerous vaporous dirt, but many factories just won't be bothered with them.*]

The compounder puts up each “ batch “ in separate tins. In a batch there'll be maybe forty pounds of crude rubber, so many pounds of sulpher sulphur , a certain amount of zinc oxide and specified amounts of other chemicals. He shoots the batches along a roller to the fellow running the Bambry mixer.

The Bambry is [an?] huge [enormous?] meat grinder. The mixer empties one of the batches from a tin into the mouth of the machine. He turns on the current, and that Bambry [just?] grinds that mixture as thoroughly that as [thoroughly that?] [up so'd?] you'd never know there 8 was more than one thing in it at all. Then a trap is released and he mixture falls like so much black dough onto the floor below. Put a lot of fellows out of work, that Bambry did ! That Thet stuff had to be mixed ont he mills before they put the Bambry ‘ s in and a mill man couldn't do in a day what that machine does in half an hour.

The mill men take [the?] batches of partly processed rubber, and go / to work on them on the mills, which [the mill?] is an overgrown clothes wringer with metal rolls. The rubber is passed through the rolls, the mill man slashes it with his knife and passes it through again and again. That's one job in which a weakling couldn't last [on?] half a day.

When it comes to dirt , the only thing the compounder's got on the mill men is color. The color of the dust with which the mill men are covered [with?] is always black. Outside of [having to?] stand standing for the same color dust one day after another, the mill men have a much heavier job than most in the plant; [/And?] its dangerous, too. There's many a one - armed elevator operator in rubber plants who'll testify to that.

When the rubber has gone through two or three different kinds of mills , its it's ready for the calendar and the calendar operator. There's a fellow whose who's got to know what the score is !

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[The calendar operator?] He has [got?] one of the most skilled, best paid and most highly respected jobs in the plant. A foreman will often raise the very devil with a helper in the mill room, he'll cometimes sometimes talk sharp to a mill man, but he rarely has [he'll almost never have?] an angry word [with?] for the calendar operator.

It's on the calendar that the finished rubber sheeting is turned out. The calendar operator and his helpers have got to keep that sheeting rolling constantly off the machine in as nearly perfect condition as possible. For various parts of the “ shoe “ various thicknesses, types, and widths of rubber sheeting are required. For each kind there is a separate calendar. One turns out sheeting for outer - soles, another turns out “ upper “ stock, and stamps the outline of the upper onto the sheeting ; another rubberizes cloth for linings, while still another rubs the “ gum “ into both sides of the cloth [?]? , to make “ joining “ pieces of various kinds. [?] watch Watching, them work, one wouldn't think that the mill men and calendar operators are working very fast. Handling heavy stock requires comparatively slow motion. Actually the mill men work at a swift pace.

The cutting room is the first place you really see the speed. Take the outsole cutters. The put a 10 piece of outsole sheeting into the cutting machine, and zip! [There's?] four soles are ready. The soles are placed on a belt and [a steady stream of them come?] [they?] come down in a steady stream to the workman who “books” them with machinelike machine/-/like precision. A “book” is a wooden-framed receptacle about two and a half feet long and [perhaps?] a foot and a half wide. Once cut, the various pieces of the shoe are placed between its cloth leaves to prevent their sticking together, for the “ gum “ is extremely adhesive, since it is not cured until after the entire shoe has been assembled.

Then there ‘[?] are the beam-die cutters, hand-die cutters and back-hand cutters. That last Hand cutting is fast becoming [getting [to?] be?] a lost art. There was a time when most everything was cut by hand . and [/The?] hand cutter was almost as highly respected as the calendar operator. Now nearly [almost?] everything is cut by machine. Even gaiter tops are cut by a girl with an electrically heated knife.

More than anywhere else it ‘ s in the making room that skill is a thing of the past. What's an old hoemaker shoemaker got that a young fellow hasn' hasn't got? Memories, just memories! Sure, an old timer is more valuable because , knowing a number of operations , he can be shifted from one to another when necessary, but there's no single job that can't be learned in a couple of weeks. The “mad” house.

I don't know how the name got started, but it sure hits the nail on the head. “The mad house,” that's what 11 its employees call a rubber shop. Production sure goes on with a maddening speed and ceaselessness. Sometimes earlier departments are late in delivering pieces of stock to the conveyor or for some other reason the conveyor is held up for a while. Then everyone runs madly around to get find the needed pieces and to get the conveyor started again, and to raise the devil with those responsible for the delay. The service boy runs to the workman who makes the missing part, the section foreman runs to that workmans’ workman's superior, the department foreman runs to the foreman of the responsible department. The madness is “ catching. “ The running around continues [keeps up?] until the conveyor is started again. Mans Men's rubbers, gum shoe shoes we call them, are made on a circular conveyor. There are thirteen of us on the “merry-go-round.” Ten women and three men make a ticket of 900 pairs a day. Some punkins [pumpkins?], huh? With the individual ticket thirteen operators couldn't make much more than half that amount. Then, they would all be skilled shoemakers and would get a skilled workmans workman's pay. As it is , the only one of the thirteen that's really skilled is the cutter and only he gets a higher pay than the others others. [rest.?]

Everyone from the lasters to the outsolers have got to keep hitting on all cylinders to finish that ticket.

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The pace is set by the conveyor and everyone does his utmost to keep up with it as well as with everyone else. The two lasters sit at a table at the head of the conveyor. At their feet are [?] are two [a?] basket baskets of lasts, rights for one, lefts for the other. At their side is a strip of linings and a batch of inner / soles. No one in a rubber shop envies the laster. Its It's a tough job, fitting the lining over the wooden or metal last, putting the innersole in place, then drawing the lining tight and sticking the edge of it fast to the innersole all around the shoe. Fingers and wrists are often sore and bandaged.

The conveyor waits for no one. Too many empty jacks gets' get you nothing but dirty looks from the forelady and even from the other operators, always anxious to finish the ticket and go home. As it passes each operator more and more pieces are added to the one-naked last ; [/Toe?] strip, heel piece, filler, toe tip and upper.

Cutting the uppers right at the conveyor is something new. The cutters used to work where they belong, right in the cutting room. The uppers were cut, booked, [and?] then carried up to the making room. There was more money in cutting uppers in those days. Then one of the stop-watch artists got it into his head to time the cutters to see if they'd be able to keep up with the 13 conveyor. Then they made the change. The hourly rate's still the same, but there's a much smaller bonus in cutting gum shoe uppers now. Well, that's how it is. They catch up with everybody sooner or later. Like a fellow says, they'll be running the mills and calendars at the conveyors next.

Uppering is another job you've got to have [real?] skillful fingers for. Both the upper and the lining are as sticky as the devil. The upperer has got to place the upper over the lining without leaving so much as a wrinkle. Some of them have got so's they can do it with their

hands alone. Some of them use their mouth to keep the upper taut while they place it over the lining, and draw the surplus rubber to the bottom of the shoe, over the inner-sole.

The heel trimmer snips the extra rubber off the back of the shoe with [a?] scissors and makes a neat seam. Now the sciver trims the surplus rubber from the bottom of the shoe with a sharp knife. Then the shoe is wiped, rolled, the outersole stuck on and it is sent down the belt to the presser.

Working fast and steady can do queer things to a person, especially when that person's all nerved up with trying to keep up with everyone else, since no one wants 14 to take the blame for holding back the work. There's that girl that works on the gaiter team downstairs. It was a real hot day last summer. I guess she wasn't feeling right up to par, and she couldn't seem to keep up with the team. The further behind she got, the harder she tried and the harder she tried the worse off she was. Everbody kept looking at her and I guess she got all the more nerved up. Finally she just straightened up for a second, looked around a little [,?] wild - eyed like, and then fainted. One of the service boys carried her down to the hospital and she stayed out of work for a few days.

Then there was the sciver on the gum-shoe team who cut her finger [a bit?] with the [that?] sharp sciving knife she uses. She went down to the hospital, got her finger bandaged and went back to work. In about five minutes she started to laugh, then she cried, and pretty soon she was hysterical. Guess a rubber shop's no place for a nervous woman anyway.

It gets under my skin the way the girls are always scrapping. If the uppers haven't been cut just right, the upperer raves at the cutter; if the wiper hasn't done a good job, the roller gets peeved at her. That's the way it goes all along the line, day after day.

The girls don't really dislike each other. Every 15 pay day a collection is taken [up?] for someone who's sick[,?] when there's a death, or maybe when someone loses a pay

envelope, [/Everybody?] chips in. No, they don't really dislike each other, that's a cinch. I guess it must be nerves , -’ just nerves.

When there's a big ticket on , the shoes from four gum shoe teams come streaming down the belt to the presser. Always makes no think of a jack-in-a-box, that presser. With four teams on , the shoes come down the belt so close together you couldn't put a hair in between. [He?] The presser grabs a shoe off the belt, places it in the pressing machine, steps on the lever, takes out the pressed shoe and passes it onto the roller. When your you're dead sure the next shoe is going to fall off the edge of the belt , he takes picks it up and does the same thing all over again.

When I get to thinking of the change that's taken place since the first conveyors were put on, I can hardly believe it myself. The first tickets were so small we could finish our days day's work early in the afternoon and go home. Slowly, bit by bit, the size of the ticket was increased. One tennis ticket that started at 800 has grown to almost 2,000 pairs.

Seems almost impossible and I guess it is the next thing to that. You just keep working, taking up the next 16 shoe a split second after your you get through with the one your you're working on. You get your whole mind and body adjusted to doing the same thing over and over again without hesitating at all and at as fast a tempo as possible. When your muscles beg you to stop, you just pay no attention to them, and keep going.

When you first start on a job, you don't think you'll ever be able to do it, but after a while you somehow adjust yourself to the pace. The day drags along. Once in a while someone asks the laster how many pairs there are to go. Then everybody swears at the questioner and tells him to work more and talk less. In a little while one of those who had has just been a rebuker becomes a questioner himself.

Funny how people get used to things. At first the women went down to the nurse to get sore wrists and arms rubbed and bandaged , thinking and saying how awful it was to have to work so fast. Now bandaged wrists and joints are a normal part of the days day's work.

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Many women come into work arrive early, get attended to by the nurse and then go to work. Just par of the regular program[;?] aches, pains, bandages, speed and all. A few years ago one nurse had precious little to do. Now three nurses have more work 17 each morning than they can easily handle. Some girls' wrists are so sore they work in constant pain all day. There are fingers so worn from pulling at rough course rubberized cloth they bleed constantly. We get a bonus.

The [Bedeaux?] system wasn't started until a few years after the conveyors were installed. About a week or two before, we were told that we were going to be given the chance to work on a bonus system; that we'd be able to earn more money, because the harder we worked the bigger our bonus would be. Then one day a bunch of young college boys wearing white shirts and with a neat neatly presse pressed in their pants, who never made a shoe in their lives came into the plant. They timed every job, keeping their eyes on a stop watch, and writing figures down on a sheet of paper. That was the beginning of marked the end of the good old days.

Some of the girls were so rattled by the man standing at their elbow for hours at a time that they worked even much faster than usual, and get a punk rating they ordinarily could, and made it impossible for themselves to earn a bonus. Others tried to put one over by working as slow as they could. But Bedeaux men couldn't be fooled so easily, and even when they were for a while , it wasn't long before they caught up with you and took a new timing.

Even more than with wages, its it's about this speed-up 18 that rubber workers complain. A couple of fellows wrote a book about rubber and the rubber industry. They had this question right down to a “T” , so's everybody could understand it. This is what they wrote ”...., it is not with this [meaning wages] that the gum worker has his quarrel, however. It is with the system that lashes him to an inhuman pace, sets this pace as normal, lashes him again to new records and year by year continues this speeding up process until he is travelling traveling at a clip no man can stand. It is with the system that sucks out his life and leaves him broken at forty....”

Rubber workers blame the whole thing on the Bedeaux Point Premium plan. Yeah, it is sure hated and mistrusted, this Bedeaux system ! Why, most of us can't even figure out what our pay should be because we hardly ever know what our standards are, how many pair pairs we're expected to make in an hours.

Not that anyone who wants to can't get the information from the forelady or foreman. To an outsider it may seen odd, but every rubber worker will understand that it takes a certain amount of courage to go after it. Most operators are [pretty much?] more or less afraid of their superiors, and would just as soon have as little to do with them as possible. I've seen big, strong workmen take ten times 19 more abuse from their foreman than they'd ever take put up with from anyone else without taking a whack at them. Like the time this Italian fellow was to take the gaiters. His job was to take the gaiters right after they had been made on the conveyor, put four or five pairs still on the lasts , mind you, onto a bar , and then load these bars into a car. Its It's pretty heavy work and he's got to keep stepping all the time. The shoes aren't vulcanized yet and the loader must be careful that they don't stick together, or they'll be spoiled while they're being cured in the heaters.

Well, the sweat was pouring from this [fellows?] face. The department foreman happened to pass by and notice two or three of the shoes stuck together. He separated them and then lambasted that fellow like I never heard before or since, threatening to fire him if he wasn't more careful. I happen to know the fellow. He's got six youngsters. I never saw fear like I saw it then, in that man's eyes. “Yes, Mr. —-, “no , Mr. —-, I'll be careful, Mr. —-.” I tell you he was shaking and big drops of sweat stood out on his forehead.

It's true , that's an unusual example ; [/Just?] the same, most of the employees are more or less afraid of their superiors. The operators aren't the only ones 20 that have someone to be afraid of, however. That same foreman [is scared to death of?] fears his own superiors. When he's told that the superintendent , or worse still , the [/President?] of the factory , is going to make a tour of inspection , he runs around like a scared rabbit, making doubly sure that every conveyor is [running?] working smoothly ; that the floor is

swept and everything ship-shape. That's the way it is, everywhere - “ fear .” * The worker is afraid of the section foreman, the section foreman trembles in the presence of an angered department foreman, the department foreman cowers before the superintendent. that a job may be lost!* Our pay envelopes.

With wages what they are and what they have been in the last few years, everybody's always trying to get a son or daughter a job in the plant. No matter how small it is another pay envelope helps out a lot. Its It's funny about that. Fourteen or fifteen years ago those same parents would maybe bring a four or five year-old-child into the shop with them; maybe on a day when they weren't working and came in for their pay. Everybody would say “ hello !” to the youngster and sure as fate someone would ask him if he was going to be a rubber worker when he grew up. Then the kid's old man would jump up and say : “No sir! Not my kid. I'm going to keep him the hell out of a rubber shop!” Then maybe he'd say 21 something about sending the kid to school. Funny, huh? Now fourteen and fifteen years later he's plenty glad if he can only get the kid a job in the plant.

Yeah, everybody's always looking for a chance to make a few extra dollars, mostly by playing the “numbers” or by being one of the “bookies” who “writes” them. There are a great many number writers ; [/Almost?] seems as if half the shop sells numbers to the other half. Neither the players nor the small-time bookies have gotten rich from the number racket yet. Those who are ahead of the buying end of the game [at all?] are few and far between. Still, people keep on losing and keep on playing. Everyone is always looking for a “good” number. Someone dreams a number and a rush is made for the bookie. “Hope springs eternal.” What's lacking in wages may be made up through a lucky “hit.”

Speaking of wages, our average hourly rate doesn't compare with that of the tire and tube division of the industry. ‘Course being a much heavier industry , they always got more money than we got did . But there's never been as big a difference as there is today. Back in ‘26 the tire and tube hands got an average of 68 1/2 ¢ an hour. At that time we averaged

56¢. When the depression hit us, their average dropped to 62¢. Ours took a power dive 22 down to 42 1/2¢ an hour.

It was in ‘34, ‘5 and ‘6 that the big change took place. Our average rose to 60 cents an hour. In those years the tire and tube average shot up to better than 96¢ an hour. The union men claim that the main reason for them getting so much more than we get is because they're organized. Guess everyone's got their own opinion about that. Still, it is true that while the tire and tube division of the industry is almost 100% organized, rubber boot and shoe workers have as yet paid much less heed to the organizing efforts of the United Rubber Workers of America.

To those who have worked there days, the stitching room is a queer spot at night. The rows of power machines are strangely silent. You ought to see them in the day time. Each operator stitches her own small portion of the tennis upper. The machines travel at a furious clip. Hunched over them and never stopping for an instant, the stitchers skillfully mannuver maneuver the cloth under the speeding needle. Like the rest of us, the stitchers are on Bedeax and time is money.

There's been changes in the stitching room too in recent years. Some machines now stitch as many as six rows of thread at a single time. There are “two in one” machines on which two operations are performed simultaneously. The eyelet machines work with the speed and sound of [rapid-fire?] machine guns.

In some rooms there's quite a lot of work done nights. Boots and shoes, made and cured the day and 23 evening before , are stripped and trimmed in the packing room. [?] [ickers?] fill hundreds of baskets of with lasts to be used next day.. The mills turn on through the night in care of the “night hawks.”

You get the same feeling at night in the shoe room as you get in the stitching department. The rows of conveyors are stopped and silent. The buzz of hundreds of voices is only a [distant vague?] memory. Loaded high with baskets of lasts an occasional truck rumbling

over the rough floor of the big, empty room, emphasises emphasizes the strange and soothing stillness.

[Is it possible that here?] Seems almost impossible , in a few hours [,?] motors will hum; heavy beam-die press-arms will force sharp edged dies through layers of stock; that conveyors will turn, while new thousands of pairs of rubber footwear will be produced in a [mad and rather pointless?] mad race against time [?].